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*One of the best ways to evaluate the effectiveness of your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is by conducting an exercise which puts all or parts of the plan into action and evaluates the response.*

*Following this checklist will help you create a successful exercise*

**Pre-Exercise Design**

* Have you reviewed past exercises for suggestions on how to make the coming exercise more productive?
* If you plan to ask for assistance from the local fire department research upcoming community events to avoid conflict; or look for opportunities to collaborate on larger-scale exercises.
* Schedule a meeting of impacted stakeholders to identify a scenario and timeframe for the exercise.
* Establish goals, objections, and performance goals for the exercise.
* Submit a briefing memo to Clergy summarizing the plan including goals, benefits, time-table and anticipated costs and benefits of the event.

**Design and Development**

* Assign responsibility for the development or purchase of the exercise materials to a staff member.
* Decide who should input to the exercise scenario.
* Create a pre-exercise notification list (police, fire, staff, etc.).
* Determine the timing of the exercise (date, hour, duration).
* Decide if the exercise will involve an actual evacuation or sheltering component.
* Select a theme/hazard for the exercise.
* Select one to three operational areas to test in the exercise. Example, communications, command and control, medical emergency response, or visitor safety.
* Decide how to monitor and measure performance.
* Publish the stated goals and objectives to key members of the staff.
* Schedule and conduct any required staff training well in advance of the exercise.
* Determine who will be invited to observe the exercise, for example local fire department, police, supply/service chain partners, outside consultants.
* Hold a safety review of the plan
* Allocate time for a post-exercise debriefing.

**Prepare for the Exercise**

* Gather or develop any material/handouts for the exercise (e.g. props, maps, write-ups, etc.).
* If you plan to use evaluators, arrange to brief them.
* If an announced event, consider having a lunch and learn briefing for the staff and announcing plans to attendees and visitors.
* Place reminders around your house of worship’s facilities.
* If an unannounced event, confirm the exercise plan with clergy, administrators, and staff to minimize disruption on days of worship.

**Running the Exercise**

* Monitor the timing (start and stop) and general flow of unfolding events.
* Begin the exercise by reviewing the goals and objectives.
* Record any confusion, questions, or concerns raised by the attendees during the exercise.
* Provide advice to the attendees on how to measure success?
* At the close of the exercise ask for immediate feedback either verbally or in writing via a short survey.

**Post Exercise Review**

* Collect and summarize feedback, especially on the effectiveness of the proposed management structure, strategy, and tactics used to deal with the emergency scenario.
* Evaluate the feedback, suggestions and general reaction to the exercise.
* Prepare a report for clergy, administrators and other relevant stakeholders. Include participant recommendations.
* Follow up with participants by both giving them feedback and soliciting suggestions.
* Set a timeframe for the next exercise.

**Issues Needing Special Attention**

* Monitor to see if your communication plan is effective.
* Did the staff and members know how to act/react to all the elements of the exercise?
* Was a clear chain of command maintained throughout the exercise?
* Were any resources needed that weren’t available?

**Other Comments or Observations:**